

What can the Holy Family teach me?

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Overview

The Church dedicates the month of February to the Holy Family to give Christians the chance to meditate on the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. As Pope Leo XIII explained, the Holy Family shows us “the perfection and completeness of all domestic virtues.” This month’s Liturgical Life eLesson focuses on ways the Holy Family can help us understand and live out the virtues of love, charity, self-sacrifice and forgiveness.

Directions: Have students read the background essay, as well as [Luke 2:41-52](#) and then discuss the questions that follow. Suggested responses are provided.

Questions and Suggested Responses

1. Why does the Church dedicate a month to the Holy Family?

The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family to give Christians the opportunity to meditate on the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, who embrace the perfection and completeness of all domestic virtues.

2. What virtues were modeled by Christ’s parents?

Mary modeled love and obedience when she said “Yes” to God, as well as fortitude when she witnessed her son being put to death. Jesus’ foster father, Joseph, demonstrated fortitude, responsibility, and mutual help by caring for and protecting his family for life.

3. Why do you think the prayer calls out the fact that Jesus spent “the greater part of [his] life in humility and subjection to Mary and Joseph”?

Jesus was God in the flesh. One might have expected him to have overpowered others, but instead, he demonstrated meekness. While he was young, he subjected himself to the natural authority of his parents.

4. Read the story of the Boy Jesus in the Temple ([Luke 2:41-52](#)). Did the story end as you expected it to? What do you think the lesson of the story is?

Accept reasoned answers. One lesson may be that, like Mary and Joseph, we will feel anxiety and worry without Jesus in our lives.

5. The theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity (love). How do we learn to practice these virtues in our families?

Families love each other unconditionally, as God loves each of us. We serve and sacrifice for one another, as Jesus sacrificed for us. We forgive each other, as God forgives us. St. Paul tells us, "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 4-8)

Extension

The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary provide a great way to mediate on the Holy Family. Think about each of the following events from the perspectives of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (remembering that they did not know at the time so much of what we know today.) Then write down some ways that members of the Holy Family teach us what a family should be.

The Annunciation

The Visitation

The Nativity

The Presentation

The finding of Jesus in the Temple

Learning from the Holy Family

The church dedicates the month of February to the holy family. The reason for this special devotion is to give Christians the chance to meditate on the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Whether our families are together or not, everyone on this earth has a mother and a father. We can all learn many valuable lessons from the example of the Holy Family. They are for us a model of virtue for all households.

When God donned humanity, he came not only to be *with us*, but to *be one of us*. And so Jesus was born into a family, like we all are. Jesus was God incarnate, and could easily have overpowered everyone. Yet he subjected himself to the law, and to his parents. Indeed, he spent most of his life on earth as a son, obeying his parents.

Everything that Jesus did was good. Therefore, we can strive to make our families like his, and to support other families. Pope Bl. John Paul II said, “The family, more than any other human reality, is the place in which the person is loved for himself and in which he learns to live the sincere gift of self.”

February is a perfect time to consecrate (which means to dedicate something to a religious purpose) your family to the Holy Family. You can say the prayer that follows with your family:

Consecration to the Holy Family

O Jesus, our most loving Redeemer, who having come to enlighten the world with your teaching and example, willed to pass the greater part of your life in humility and subjection to Mary and Joseph in the poor home in Nazareth, thus sanctifying the Family that was to be an example for all Christian families, graciously receive our family as it dedicates and consecrates itself to Thee this day.

Defend us, guard us and establish among us your holy fear, true peace, and concord in Christian love: in order that, by conforming ourselves to the divine pattern of your family, we may be able, all of us without exception, to attain to eternal happiness.

Mary, dear Mother of Jesus and Mother of us, by your kindly intercession make this our humble offering acceptable in the sight of Jesus, and obtain for us His graces and blessings.

O Saint Joseph, most holy guardian of Jesus and Mary, assist us by your prayers in all our spiritual and temporal needs; that so we may be enabled to praise our divine Savior Jesus, together with Mary and you, for all eternity.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be (Say these three prayers three times each.)